

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, TH
SUBJ: SUMMARY OF RECENT LABOR DEVELOPMENTS IN THAILAND

REF: BANGKOK 18794

1. EFFECTIVE AUGUST 1, 1977, WICHIT SAENGTHONG, DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL, RTG DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL), AND SOEMSI KANTHAMALA, DEPUTY SECRETUARY GENERAL, OFFICE OF ACCELERATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT (ARD), EXCHANGED JOBS. AS BOTH DOL AND ARD COMES UNDER THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, TH S SHIFT TOOK PLACE BY MINISTERIAL ORDER. SINCE THE OCTOBER COUP WICHIT HAS BEEN CONSIDERED GENERAL KRIANGSAK CHAMANAN'S MAN IN THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR. HIS DEPARTURE RAISES QUESTIONS ABOUT GEN KRIANGSAK'S CAPACITY TO CARRY OUT RECENT PLEDGES TO PROMOTE THE CAUSE OF ORGANIZED LABOR. SOEMSI COMES TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR WITH NO PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN THE LABOR FIELD AND WILL NO DOUBT REQUIRE TIME TO GET HER BEARINGS.

2. ON AUGUST 2, 1977, SUWIT YINGWORAPHAN, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE RTG DEPARTMENT OF LABOR TOLD AAFLI REPRESENTATIVES VALENTIN B. SUSSO, JR. AND EMILIO GARZA TO SUSPEND ALL AAFLI'S CURRENT ACTIVITIES IN THAILAND. HE ALSO ADMONISHED AAFLI FOR GOING
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OUTSIDE THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR CHANNEL IN DEALING WITH RTG. THIS PRESUMABLY REFERRED TO AAFLI'S FREQUENT EFFORTS TO PERSUADE GENERAL KRIANGSAK TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF AAFLI AND ORGANIZED LABOR.

3. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE ON AUGUST 11, 1977, DIRECTOR GENERAL SUWIT YINGWORAPHAN ANNOUNCED THAT A CABINET RESOLUTION OF APRIL

21, 1977, DECLARED STATE ENTERPRISE UNIONS OUTSIDE THE PURVIEW OF THE LABOR RELATIONS ACT AND THEREFORE IMPROPERLY REGISTERED AND WITHOUT LEGAL FOUNDATION. ALTHOUGH LABOR LEADERS WERE PREVIOUSLY AWARE OF THE APRIL 21 RESOLUTION, THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME DEPARTMENT OF LABOR HAS PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED ITS EXISTENCE.

4. IN APPARENT DEFIANCE OF RTG, 300 LEADERS FROM 22 STATE ENTERPRISE UNIONS MET ON AUGUST 18 TO PLAN STRATEGY AGAINST RTG EFFORTS TO ABOLISH THEIR UNIONS. THEY NOMINATED THREE LABOR CANDIDATES, ALL PROMINENT LEADERS OF STATE ENTERPRISE UNIONS, FOR THE LABOR DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (LDC). (THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR WILL CONDUCT AN ELECTION ON AUGUST 25 TO SELECT FIVE LABOR REPRESENTATIVES TO THE LDC.)

5. IN A FOLLOW-UP MEETING ON AUGUST 23, 42 LEADERS FROM BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR UNIONS NOMINATED A COMBINED SLATE OF FIVE LABOR CANDIDATES FOR THE LABOR DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL. THE SLATE INCLUDED THE THREE STATE ENTERPRISE CANDIDATES NOMINATED AT THE AUGUST 18 MEETING.

6. ON AUGUST 24 THANONG LAOVANICH, PRESIDENT OF THE BOONRAWD BREWERY WORKERS UNION AND THE RTG APPOINTED LABOR REPRESENTATIVE TO THE RECENT ILO CONVENTION, ANNOUNCED THAT HE AND 27 OTHER LABOR LEADERS FROM PRIVATE SECTOR UNIONS WOULD BOYCOTT THE AUGUST 25 MEETING IF STATE ENTERPRISE LABOR LEADERS ARE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PERMITTED TO PARTICIPATE.

7. EMBASSY WILL REPORT BY SEPARATE TELEGRAM OUTCOME OF AUGUST 25 ELECTION OF LABOR REPRESENTATIVES TO THE LABOR DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL WHEN RESULTS ARE AVAILABLE.

8. IN AN EFFORT TO MUSTER FOREIGN SUPPORT AGAINST RTG LABOR POLICY, THAI LABOR LEADERS ARE ACTIVELY CULTIVATING THEIR CONTACTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR MOVEMENT. DONALD U'REN, ASIAN REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT FEDERATION, VISITED BANGKOK AUGUST 20-22 TO DISCUSS AFFILIATION AND STRATEGY WITH LEADERS FROM EIGHT TRANSPORT ORIENTED UNIONS. JAN KULAKOWSKI, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR AND ROSALINO R. MARTIN, DIRECTOR, BATU SOCIAL INSTITUTE, VISITED BANGKOK AUGUST 21-23 TO DISCUSS OPTIONS WITH THEIR BATU AFFILIATES. ALL THREE SEEMED DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT RTG LABOR POLICY AND INCLINED TO SUPPORT THEIR THAI AFFILIATES IN INTERNATIONAL LABOR CIRCLES.
O'DONOHUE

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